

# LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN 2008

## Louisiana's Children At a Glance

State Population <sup>1</sup> .....	4,287,768
Population, Children Under 18 <sup>2</sup> .....	1,147,651
State Poverty Rate <sup>3</sup> .....	17
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 <sup>4</sup> .....	23.8
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 <sup>5</sup> .....	23
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 <sup>6</sup> .....	31.5

*All statistics are for 2006.*

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2005, 7,421 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Louisiana, a rate of 10.8 per 1,000 children, and representing a 13.9% increase from 2004. Of these children, 76.2% were neglected, 27.7% were physically abused, and 7.2% were sexually abused.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2005, 21 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Louisiana.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2005, 4,833 children in Louisiana lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 4,397 children in 2004. In 2005, 32.6% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 16.4% were 16 or older.<sup>9</sup>
- Of the children in out-of-home care in 2005, 45.5% were white, 51.5% black, 1.2% Hispanic, 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.5% children of other races and ethnicities.<sup>10</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 2,762 children exiting out-of-home care in 2005, 70.3% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2005, 469 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Louisiana, a 3% increase from 455 in 2004.<sup>12</sup>
- Of the 4,833 children in out-of-home care in 2005, 1,165, or 24.1%, were waiting to be adopted.<sup>13</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2005, approximately 58,229 Louisiana grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>14</sup>
- Of the 4,833 children in out-of-home care in 2005, 14.3% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>15</sup>
- Of all Louisiana children in kinship care in 2005, 54.3% were white, 41.7% were black, 1.7% were Hispanic, 1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.3% were other races.<sup>16</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Louisiana increased from 23,471 in March 2006 to 23,685 in March 2007, an increase of 0.5%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2007 was 10,788, a 30.7% decrease from March 2006.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Louisiana was at 36.6% of the federal poverty level.<sup>18</sup>

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- In 2006, Louisiana spent \$183,403,367 in TANF funds, including 24.4% on basic assistance, 0.8% on transportation, 74.8% on nonassistance, and none on child care.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2006, Louisiana collected and distributed \$292,527,410 in child support funds, an increase of 1.1% from 2005.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2006, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Louisiana was \$719 per month. The wage necessary to afford this two-bedroom apartment was \$13.82 per hour working a 40-hour week.<sup>21</sup>

## C H I L D C A R E A N D H E A D S T A R T

- In 2005, Louisiana had an estimated monthly average of 51,800 children served by subsidized child care; 51,800 children received subsidized child care in 2004, and 54,600 in 2003.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2007, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Louisiana a family of three could make no more than \$31,836, which is equivalent to 70% of the state's median income.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2007, no Louisiana children were on the state's waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2006, Head Start served 21,910 Louisiana children, a 0.3% increase from 2005.<sup>25</sup>

## H E A L T H A N D S U B S T A N C E A B U S E

- In 2004, 685,600 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Louisiana, representing 61.6% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2004, 9,671 children were enrolled in Medicaid in Louisiana on the basis of being in foster care.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2004, Louisiana spent \$33,814,036 on Medicaid services for children in foster care, and \$3,496 per foster care enrollee on Medicaid services.<sup>28</sup>
- Louisiana reported spending \$273,016 of its total Medicaid spending in 2004 for children in foster care on targeted case management services.<sup>29</sup>
- Louisiana reported spending \$2,397,270 of its total Medicaid expenditures in 2004 for foster children on rehabilitative services.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2006, Louisiana had 142,389 children enrolled in its Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), a 23.34% increase from 2005, when 109,150 children were enrolled.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2004, 7,139 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Louisiana a rank of 49 nationally in percent of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>32</sup>
- In 2004, 684 infants younger than age 1 died in Louisiana, giving it a rank of 50 nationally in infant mortality rates (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>33</sup>
- In 2004, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Louisiana was 30.2 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 93.1. This reflects a total rate of 56.2 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>34</sup>

- Cumulative through 2005, 14,948 adults and adolescents, as well as 137 children under the age of 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Louisiana.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2005, an estimated 31,000 children ages 12–17, and 217,000 adults 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Louisiana.<sup>36</sup>

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2005, 263 children aged out of out-of-home care in Louisiana.<sup>37</sup>
- In 2005, 21,000 Louisiana teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2005, 20% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 17,000 children ages 12–17 in Louisiana needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 20,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2004, 39 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.97 per 100,000 children.<sup>42</sup>

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2004, 54 children younger than 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Louisiana, a 116% increase from 25 in 2003.<sup>43</sup>
- In 2006, 22,355 children younger than 18 were arrested in Louisiana, a 6.1% increase from 23,806 arrests in 2005. Of the arrests in 2006, 1,035 were for violent crimes and 313 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>44</sup>
- A 2003 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,821 children in juvenile correction facilities in Louisiana.<sup>45</sup>

## FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN

- In 2004, Louisiana spent \$215,250,308 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 62% was from federal funds, and 38% was from state funds.<sup>46</sup>
- In 2004, of the \$132,601,784 in federal funds received for child welfare, 52% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 12% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 30% came from the Social Services Block Grant, and 6% came from other federal sources.<sup>47</sup>
- Out of 4,833 children in out-of-home care in Louisiana in 2005, only 2,691 children, or 55.7%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>48</sup>

## LOUISIANA'S CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

- A 2003 General Accounting Office (GAO) report documented that staff shortages, high caseloads, high worker turnover and low salaries impinge on delivering services to achieve safety, permanence, and well being for children.<sup>49</sup>
- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have clearly demonstrated that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.<sup>50</sup>
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/ foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children; these high caseloads contribute to high worker turnover and insufficient services being provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.<sup>51</sup>
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Louisiana was \$23,280; the median income for a family of four was \$50,529.<sup>52</sup>

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